



Safety and Security Recommendations for Homeless Resource Centers Owned by Shelter the Homeless

May 22, 2019

The Resource Center Steering Committee Transition Team tasked the Public Safety Transition Task Group to identify best practices and make general safety and security policy recommendations to be adopted by all Homeless Resource Centers Operators and Shelter the Homeless. The recommendations were submitted and approved by the Resource Center Steering Committee Transition Team and the Shelter the Homeless Board of Directors.

The Public Safety Transition Task Group consists of the following agencies: Catholic Community Services of Utah, Downtown Salt Lake City Alliance, Premier Security, The Road Home, Salt Lake City Police Department, Salt Lake City Mayor's Office, Salt Lake County Mayor's Office, Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office, Shelter the Homeless, South Salt Lake Mayor's Office, South Salt Lake Police Department, Unified Police Department, Utah Department of Public Safety, Utah Department of Workforce Services, Volunteers of America Utah, and West Valley City Police Department.

The Public Safety Task Group began meeting bi-monthly in January 2019, reviewing current practices within the downtown Rio Grande community shelter, the current homeless resource center delivery model, safety and security policies from out of state homeless shelter service providers, audit findings by the Utah Legislative Auditor General with regard to safety and security in homeless resource centers (report ILR 2018-A), and other related resources. Below are the final recommendations.

Recommendations

- Homeless Resource Center Operators (HRC Operators) and Shelter the Homeless (STH) will establish clear expectations with clients and staff regarding safety and security measures within the homeless resource centers.
- HRC Operators and STH shall hold a regular safety and security meeting with partners to assess safety within and around the surrounding area of the homeless resource centers. Meetings should include problem-solving discussions, review of recent safety challenges and safety data, and review of safety procedures related to each Homeless Resource Center. Participants in the meeting should include staff representatives from the HRC Operator, staff representatives from STH, law enforcement, private security, and other community partners as necessary.
- HRC Operators and STH shall provide access and cooperate with law enforcement in the prevention and investigation of crimes. Law enforcement may utilize a K9 unit as needed. Law enforcement agrees to respect the client confidentiality and privacy to the extent possible. Law enforcement should also coordinate with HRC Operators prior to access, when possible.
- HRC Operators and STH shall establish a clear and timely processes to provide video surveillance footage to law enforcement officers investigating criminal activity.

- HRC Operators will facilitate collaboration between clients and law enforcement resource officers in order to connect clients with services.
- HRC Operators will not permit illegal activities. HRC Operators will coordinate with law enforcement to establish a process for the investigation of criminal activity. HRC Operators will contact law enforcement to report crimes including but not limited to instances of illegal drug possession and/or use within or around the Homeless Resource Center property.
- HRC Operators will provide a list of prohibited items related to safety and will train staff on the policy and procedure for handling those items. The prohibited items will be reviewed with clients upon intake and will be posted visibly throughout the facility.
- HRC Operators and STH will utilize a multi-disciplinary approach involving law enforcement (when criminal) and private security when addressing both criminal and non-criminal concerns. HRC Operators will refer to a violation grid for guidance related to the classification of a violation, decisions related to exiting patrons, and reporting individuals to law enforcement.
- HRC Operators will utilize evidence-based techniques and best practices to work with clients who violate expectations and reinforce Homeless Resource Center expectations to remain in the facility.
- HRC Operators will recognize circumstances where service restrictions are necessary and preserve the safety of the individual, others, and/or the facility. HRC Operators will maintain restrictions that are comprehensive and reasonable. HRC Operators and STH will work with coordinated entry to identify other available sheltering and resource options for individuals barred from the facility.
- HRC Operators, law enforcement, and private security should use a trauma-informed approach when interacting with clients who violate expectations and seek to strike an appropriate balance between addressing the needs of individual client with the general safety of the staff and clients within the shelter and the surrounding community.
- HRC Operators and STH, along with law enforcement and community sponsors, will engage and be responsive to community concerns regarding safety and security in the immediate vicinity of the Homeless Resource Center.